

BETWEEN BYTES

THE JOURNAL OF THE JERSEY ATARI COMPUTER SOCIETY.

Volume 5, Number 11

November 1987

\$2.00

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, November 17
at 7:00 P.M.

ST:

OCP Art Studio

8-bit:

Ace of Aces



**We will meet at
the Camden
County Library,
next to the
Echelon Mall.**

MEETING NOTES

By Chuck Babli

If you have been reading this column for the last couple of months, you will remember that I have been asking for volunteers to demonstrate new or old software that other members might be interested in seeing. I am also interested in your ideas as to what you, the members, would like to see demonstrated at a meeting. However, as of this writing, no one has yet come forward. Please let your club help you by giving us some suggestions, or by volunteering to demonstrate something.

If you would like to respond to the above request, you can:

- leave me a message on the bulletin board,
- call me at home, or
- see Forrest at the meeting.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated by all.

On a lighter note, we will be having two presentations this month.

Forrest Blood will demonstrate on the ST a program from Rainbird Software called "OCP Art Studio." It is a recent release, so Forrest hasn't had the program for very long, but knowing him, he will probably have it pretty well mastered by meeting time.

For the 8-bit machines, we have a real treat. Frank Staiano, one of our disk librarians, will be demonstrating Ace of Aces by Accolade. Since its release, this program has been one of the hottest games on the market.

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Hmmm. Not much room here either. Let's try page 12.



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another meeting at the Library has come and gone. Even if I say so myself, I think that it went much better than the first meeting. We almost followed the schedule to the minute--not quite, but almost. We will get better as everybody gets used to having to keep a very close eye on the time. Please let the executive committee know your opinion and any thoughts for improvements. Remember that your opinion *does* count. We may not be able to incorporate all of the suggestions but who knows, there may be a great idea smoldering in your brain and it could be incorporated. Just remember, we only have two hours for the meeting.

One of the suggestions that I would like to throw out for discussion is a "technical column" for *Between Bytes*. I personally dabble in electronics and, going through the membership roster, we seem to have quite a selection of talent at JACS. There are a lot of simple projects that could be presented to the club that would make our computing life easier and more rewarding. Put on your thinking caps and make a suggestion. Somebody may have a solution. Another idea: would you like to learn more about how computers work instead of just how to turn one on and use it? There will be a quiz at the next meeting! Ha, ha!

For those members that did not make the October meeting I will now repeat my warning. If more people don't come up with presentations for 8-bit Ataris, I will prepare a presentation for each meeting. I collect word processors and at the last count have about a dozen, which would be enough for about a year's worth of meetings.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.

All kidding aside: I am preparing a demo and a review to go into *Between Bytes* of the program that I obtained in London. I also have another word processor from England that at some future date will be reviewed and possibly demonstrated at a meeting but, a) You do not want every meeting to be the same, and b) I do not like to talk about

the same subject over and over. My throat tends to get dry, and I do enough training and demonstrating of programs in my work, so please give me a break!

Changing the subject, I have given a number of disks that I got from London Atari Club to our esteemed disk librarian to incorporate into the 8-bit disk library. He will look them over and make some of them into club disks, but I do not think all at the same time. Maybe one a month or every other month. He is the boss where disks are concerned. Some of the programs are quite interesting and useful. Software comes from UK, USA and Australia so there is quite a variety

Please remember that TECH Q&A is back in the program and that you should get all of your questions ready. Also if you have an off-brand printer and have trouble preparing a printer driver for it bring the control codes from the manual and I will try to set up a demo on preparing a customized driver. It is easy when you have done it a few times--remember my 12 word processors--but the first time around it sure is confusing.

Enough said for this month. See you all at the meeting.

Ian Sklodowski



FORGET YOUR ARTICLE?

That's OK--just get it in (via BBS, mail, or at the meeting on an ST disk) by November 30th if it's for *Between Bytes*, or November 20th if it's for *ST Potpourri*.

Even tighter here! Maybe there's room on 7.

October Meeting Notes

by Debbie Collarin

The meeting, our second one to be held at the Camden County Library, was held on October 13. The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM

The first presentation, done by Bob Whipple, ST Coordinator, was ST Mad Libs. It is a great program for keeping kids of all ages entertained. It has 8 illustrated stories that you supply the nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. for. Then the program places them in the story that you chose and the speech synthesizer tells you the story.

Next, Forrest Blood, our treasurer, told us that he had an opportunity to get up to the Boston AtariFest. He said that there were over 50 vendors and 1/2 dozen user groups there. Most of the things being shown were for the ST.

Ian next opened up the Technical Question & Answer part of the meeting. He brought up all the discussion on the bulletin board about the Auto-Dialer. There is a big controversy over these items. The FCC has said they are a no-no and the majority of people feel that they are a nuisance. Next a question was asked about ST formatting. This, it was decided, is a personal preference but if anyone would be exchanging software with someone with the new 520STFM only use 80 tracks because that is all it can handle.

After the break, which was between 7:55PM and 8:05PM, new business was discussed. Irv Feinberg, Advisory Chairman, brought in some of the new ads that Atari will be showing this holiday season. The ads were for the new XE game system vs. Nintendo. These ads will be shown in magazines and on TV.

Irv also had some great news about our JACS Print Shop disks. He presented to Ian a signed contract with No-Frills Software along with an advance check from this company for royalties. Irv and Bob Whipple, along with Michael Fein, had been in negotiations for some time with No-Frills. They explained how several times before software companies had approached them about buying our disks, but it never came to anything. No-Frills is going to be making Commodore, IBM, and Apple versions of our disks and we will be able to sell

them on a commission basis at the Trenton Computer Fair. Also, we are given credit on each disk sold and in the ads. Bob saw one of the ads in "ATARI EXPLORER," the November-December edition.

The 8-bit demonstration done by Ian Sklodowski, President, was Awardware. Awardware is a nice little program that does certificates, scrolls, awards and tickets. There are only some minor problems with this particular piece of software. One is that the heart border for some reason has some small broken parts and the other is that the program does not show what will be produced on the screen. This program will not use our or any other Print Shop disks.

Before Jon Rodman announced the door prize it was remarked that we need volunteers to do demonstrations. The door prize, Alpha Systems Graphic Transformer was won by Debbie Collarin. Debbie also won the 50-50 again this month of 8 JACS BUCS.



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November 30, 1987

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Disk Notcher	\$4.95
Maxell 3 1/2 DS/DD Box of Ten—8-bit.	\$19.95

*Cash price—for charge, add 3%

STORE HOURS

Monday—Friday	10 A.M.—8 P.M.
Saturday	10 A.M.—5 P.M.
Sunday	12 P.M.—5 P.M.

Newsletter Reviews

by Joe Verble

This month we have fourteen newsletters from twelve Atari Groups for review. I hope everyone had a successful "Trick or Treat" night and didn't get sick from too much candy. I carved two pumpkins, one for my granddaughter and one for my son as my contribution to Halloween. I managed to avoid the ghosts and goblins. This has nothing to do with reviews so let's get on with them.

ACENET: October 1987

This letter from the Santa Clarita Valley Atari of Valencia, CA reviews a spelling game with the title "Spellakazam" for the 8-bit computer and DBASIC for the ST. An article called "Eight Bit Archiving" describes a utility, ARC, which reduces files 45-55%.

B.A.S.E.: September 1987

The Bloomington Atari System Enthusiasts, B.A.S.E., are located in Bloomington, IL. Their letter contains an interesting article on "cold starting" an 8-bit Atari without turning it off. Another article is on the purchase of the Federated Group Inc. by Atari. These electronic stores will give Atari another outlet.

Huntsville Atari User's Group: Oct. 1987

From the "Heart of Dixie" comes this newsletter. There is an article on "Software Blackout" concerning the lack of software for the 8-Bit Atari. A 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ disk drive is available for the ST from Hayward Computer whose address is given in the letter. "Could You Use a Battery Back-up?" tells you how to use nickel cadmium batteries to keep your computer working when power is lost. There are several Atari bulletins giving the status of new products. There is a problem with Turbo Basic when using singly or double subscripted variables. The problem is defined and a solution given.

LOCO Express: October 1987

From the Low Country of Charleston SC comes a newsletter with an article titled "Return to the Top," which tells about the

rise, fall, and present recovery of Atari. Another article explores the "Dangers of Non-Standard Memory Expansions." You may be interested in the article "Compact Disks and Computers" which gives insight in using the CD with computers, especially the ST. A type-in program allows you to convert 8-Bit files to ST Writer files. Finally, a tutorial takes up the topic of Boolean logic.

N.E.A.T.: September 1987

N.E.A.T. is the North East Atari Team from across the river in Philadelphia. There is a page called the "8-Bit SIG" that gives some interesting tips for using an 8-bit computer. Equal space is given to the ST with the "ST SIG." This column explains those TOS and GEMDOS error codes. There is also a list of BBS'S in the Philadelphia area, but none in New Jersey.

Nybbles & Bytes: September 1987

This letter from Phoenix, AZ has a warning for users of the XM301 Modem. This unit has some bare unused wires that may cause trouble. The cure is given. There is a modification for the XM301 in another article to improve its operation. Another is on "Preventive Maintenance" for the 850 Interface. ST users can read a review of DBASIC called "A Controversial New Basic" and a review of Neochrome animation. Some program hints are given for the 8-bit.

On Line Magazine: Sept. and Oct. 1987

On Line Magazine is from a Cincinnati, OH group, and we have two magazines for review this month.

In the September issue there is a review of DBASIC for the ST. This gives another opinion. "Me and My ST" discusses the "AERCO" memory expansion as used on a 520ST. An "ST Sig" column gives information to ST users. Sorry 8-Bitters, there is nothing for you here.

Except for "ST Sig" there wasn't much for either the 8-Bit or ST user in the October issue. Most of the newsletter was devoted to their Disk Library Update (4 pages).

PACE WORLD: October 1987

This letter from Hampton, VA contains some humorous definitions for computer terms. There is a review of a "Forms Generator" program distributed by Twenty-Fifth Century Software which does what the software's name implies.

POKEY: September and October 1987

This Atari group in Buffalo, NY came through with two newsletters this month.

The September issue reviews the book *An Atari 8-Bit Extra* by ANALOG Computing which you may want to read before buying the book. There is an article on use of the XM301 with "1030 Express." For those with an Action cartridge, "Action! for Basic Programmers" may interest you. Interested in a cheap 80 column printer? Read about "Big Blue" for \$29.95. It was impressive. An ST game, "Gridiron," was reviewed in great detail.

The October issue has a column titled "TURBO BASIC Tips and Techniques" which answers letters from readers on this subject. You might be interested in George Poletti's letter as he is a JACS member. There is a type-in program "Word Find in Pascal" written in Kyan Pascal which generates arrays of letters with embedded words. This issue is devoted to games for the 8-bit computer. There are reviews of new games and a nostalgic look at great Atari games of the past. If you use GFA BASIC there is a review of a new graphics program, "GFA Vector," that can be used with it.

STATUS: September 1987

This letter from Virginia Beach, VA is made up of reprints from other newsletters. The "Editor's Corner" makes a point of this by stressing the lack of articles from the membership, the loss of members and other problems the group is having. They are the same as our group and others are experiencing as computer development moves forward. There was a good review of Antic's desk accessory "Crystal" for the ST.

STUN: September 1987

STUN stands for the ST Users' Network, which is located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Unlike the Virginia Beach group which is just keeping its head above water, this group is experiencing a rapid growth and paints a rosy picture of their prospects. The feature article is on printer drivers for the ST. There are instructions for making your own driver for your printer and word processor. A Toshiba IBM Printer Driver for the 1st Word Processor is given as an example. Another article explains the TTP program, which seems to be troublesome for the ST novice and expert alike. It was for me as I don't know what it is. Details and a listing for those that may be interested are given in the article.

The W.A.N.D.: September 1987

The initials stand for Westchester Atari News Digest, located in White Plains, NY. This is another group feeling the pain of the ST revolution and still predominantly committed to 8-bit users. Several articles are devoted to which way to go—ST, 8-bit, or both. Paul Macheoverna, from our fellow New Jersey group JACG, had a reprint of his article titled "What Will it be? ST or XE?" The feature article is for the ST and is titled "pc-DITTO: The Real Scoop." This is a program from Avant-Garde Systems. So much for the 8-bitters in W.A.N.D.

This concludes this month's review. Remember—there are many more newsletters in the library than are reviewed here. Reviews in back issues of Between Bytes will refresh your memory. I bring all of the year's newsletters to the meetings. If you ask, I can bring newsletters from prior years to the next meeting. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the next meeting.



Top Gunner from Microprose

Review by Larry Nocella

Top Gunner is a collection of three games from Microprose, a long time software maker for Atari. The three games come on one double sided disk with a no-nonsense menu to load them. The first (and my favorite game) is called *MiG Alley Ace*.

MiG Alley Ace is a game with a split screen where one player has a pilot's eye view in the top screen, and another player in the bottom, like a two player flight simulator. This isn't just flying planes, though; this is combat over the land of Korea. You can fly with a human or computer wingman or against another human. A total of four planes are allowed in the air, two of which can be controlled by a human. The graphics aren't good, but who cares? The game is fun. You get the satisfaction of seeing the look of fear on your opponent's face when you zoom out of the sky spouting bullets. The controls are good, even if primitive. Each person has to use the keyboard to increase or decrease power, and since the computer can only register one key at a time, only one person can use throttle at a time, which is frustrating once in a while, but a minor nuisance. The action is fast and furious, especially when it's one on one, because the computer has less to keep track of. Your plane can take more than one hit, and the tension really builds when one plane gets so crippled it begins to plummet, while one plane is left to do the fighting against two opponents. *MiG Alley Ace* is a great multi-player game, and since I like multi-player games so much, I think this game was worth the price alone.

I also got *Hellcat Ace*, which, in terms of control and graphics is a one player version of *MiG Alley Ace*. The mission in *Hellcat* is to shoot down five planes and become an ace. There are several missions to complete that you select from, which are detailed in the excellent manual, and also gave me a better understanding of the Korean War. *Hellcat Ace* has better control and smoother movement than *MiG Alley* but cannot stack up to Microprose's more recent works, like *F-15 Strike Eagle*. As part of a 3 in 1 package, *HELLCAT ACE* is a fine one player game. It can be played multi player, but each player takes turns, which is different than split screen. If you have it, try the

mission "Get Yamamoto" on level 3, with two enemy planes. It took me a long time and a lot of planes to complete it. For *Hellcat* and *MiG Alley*, the manual provides basic combat maneuvers which really help and educate ever so slightly. By the way, in both games you're armed only with machine guns, no heat seeking missiles to fall back on now! This adds fun and tension to the games.

Finally, there is *Air Rescue*. This time, instead of a pilot's eye view, we look at the outside of a helicopter flying through caverns (which are mapped in the manual) rescuing people while dodging lots of projectiles, enemy ships, and their missiles. The graphics are blocky and blink a lot, and while this game is still a fun arcade game, it lost its flavor after a while, and I was soon rebooting for *MiG Alley Ace*. Still, it did come in a three in one package, so it was all right. Nothing special, but still fun.

Lastly, I'd like to mention that I bought these three games for \$19. Sixteen dollars for the games, and \$3 for postage and handling from S.D.A. (Software Distributors of America) Mail Order. They said it would be delivered in ten days, but it was home in seven. The package worked fine and was defended from rough handling by layers of those styrofoam wiggles (or whatever they are called). S.D.A. did a great job, and if I ever want to use mail order again, they'll be the first I look up.

A Note from the Treasurer by Forrest Blood

JACS BUCS sales have gotten off to a good start. Most of the membership has purchased at least \$5 worth of JACS BUCS, although there are still a few members who haven't contributed yet. Sales of the black printer ribbons which fit the BMC-80, CTI-801, Legend 880, Atari 801 & 804 printers have been brisk. Sales of our 8-bit Disk of the Month and the ST public domain disks have fallen off a bit over the past two months.

While I did accept checks for JACS BUCS from a few of you during the meeting, I can no longer do so. If you haven't ordered any JACS BUCS yet, please look in the September and November issues of *Between Bytes* for the order forms, and mail your order to me as soon as possible. If you don't want to sacrifice your copy of the newsletter, I'll have additional copies of the JACS BUCS order forms at the next meeting. I still have a good supply of those ribbons left, but they're going fast. See you at the meeting.



BEFORE



AFTER

Well, it seems a lot of you didn't really know who the guy over on the bottom left is. Believe it or not, it's the same guy as on the top left! Yes, it's true. See if you can identify him before the end of this column.

As I mentioned last month, Bob Whipple took a digitized picture of the "mystery man" and messed with it with DEGAS. I think he did a pretty good job; don't you?

As far as I know, the picture was digitized at a computer show somewhere in Europe. You've probably seen the original once or twice before, floating around on slide shows and bulletin boards.

And now...

The unveiling of the
Mystery Man...

It's...

Uh oh, I'm out of room. Turn to page 2 for his name.

Northeast Atari Computer Fair



through the eyes of Forrest Blood

The Northeast Atari Fair was held at the Centrum, in Worcester, Massachusetts on October 10 & 11, 1987. The event was staged by the Boston Computer Society, a group which was formed in 1977. By my count, there were 47 vendors and 6 user groups who occupied booths. I arrived at 10:30 am, half an hour after the fair began, and was surprised to see a full house.

The user groups displayed an interesting array of hardware and software. One group featured an Atari 800 putting a radio controlled model race car through its paces. Another group displayed a beta version of the popular game Shanghai running on an 800XL. The Rhode Island ACE had a Casio CZ-101 synthesizer playing music, and they would even sell you a cassette recording of their most popular tunes for \$5. Most of the groups were loyal to either the 8-bit or ST computers, but not both.

Nearly all of the hardware & software vendors displayed products for the ST line exclusively. JNL Technologies demonstrated a prototype adapter box which converted RGB analog signals from an ST into a composite video signal. This adapter produced a clean picture in low resolution mode (320 x 200), and will be priced between \$70 and \$100. For those of you considering purchasing such an adapter box, please be aware that it's simply impossible to get a legible 80 column display using composite video. An 80 column display requires 640 lines of resolution, which isn't possible to travel on a single video connection. That's also the reason the new Super VHS VCR's switched to a Y/C connection, which divides the video signal into two components (chroma and luminence) which travel over separate wires.

ICD displayed BBS Express! ST, a bulletin board system for the ST written by their senior software engineer, Keith Ledbetter. This system boasts up to 32 trackable surveys, 40/80 column

support, Xmodem and Ymodem protocols and other features. BBS Express! ST operates on a 520ST or 1040ST in either color or monochrome modes, and retails for \$79.95.

ICD also demonstrated their new ST Host Adapter, which adapts SCSI hard drives to the ST through the DMA port. The ST Host Adapter features a built in battery backed-up time/date clock, support of up to 7 SCSI devices, and it allows daisy chaining of other devices (ie. Atari's laser printer) to the DMA port. ICD's hard disk handler is the only one available with built in verify and error retry. A complete hard drive system consists of this adapter card, a SCSI controller card, the hard drive, power supply, enclosure, cables and software. The ST Host Adapter goes for \$139.95, the Adaptec MFM controller is \$135.00 and the Adaptec RLL controller (for higher capacity drives) is \$185. ICD also has a package deal which consists of the adapter with a 3 foot DMA cable and software, Adaptec MFM controller with mounting kit, and a cable which connects the adapter to the SCSI controller for \$249.95 (add \$50.00 to substitute the RLL controller).

Avant-Garde Systems was demonstrating their latest version of PC-Ditto, the PC emulator program, which supports IBM monochrome or CGA graphics on either a color or monochrome ST system. The monochrome upgrade is now included with the original program, which retails for \$89.95. Earlier purchasers of PC-Ditto will automatically receive this free upgrade if they mail in their registration cards.

Astra Systems displayed their System HD+, which is a combination 20 megabyte hard disk and double sided 3¹/₂" floppy drive, backed up with a 1 year warranty. Compuclub was handing out free November issues of ST World, a monthly newspaper devoted to the ST computer. Compuclub was also demonstrating LC Technologies' Stereotek 3D Glasses. These liquid crystal shutter (LCS) glasses produce a realistic holographic image, although they flicker in bright light. Maybe we'll see a reduction in the \$149.95 price tag, now that some of the video game systems have recently introduced similar, inexpensive 3D glasses.

WordPerfect Corporation was demonstrating their recently released WordPerfect word processor for the ST. This version of WordPerfect for the ST includes all those features found in version 4.1 of the same program for the IBM PC. WordPerfect boasts over 125 commands, mouse support, 115,000 word spelling checker, thesaurus, macros, over 200 printer drivers and many other features. This word processor will operate on a 520ST with one drive, although an additional drive and more memory is recommended. WordPerfect comes on 6 single-sided disks, and retails for \$399. WordPerfect is also available (for the same price) for the Amiga, Data General and soon, the Macintosh.

RF Microtech was selling some interesting hardware to expand the ST's capabilities. They were demonstrating a touch screen modification for the Atari SC1224 color monitor. The original bezel on the Atari monitor is replaced with their touch screen. The touch screen modification also includes the necessary touch screen drivers to emulate the mouse. The touch screen monitor is part of a complete system, which they are offering as a value added retailer (VAR). The touch screen modification is also available separately for approximately \$900.

RF Microtech was also showing Nite Lite Systems' LittleLan Network, a slow speed LAN which utilizes their 4 port (SP408) or 8 port (SP808) programmable RS-232C interfaces to communicate between ST computers at up to 19,200 baud. No price was available on the LittleLan Network, but the programmable interfaces were on sale for \$199 (SP408) and \$349 (SP808). The interfaces offer 14 selectable baud rates from 50 to 19,200, and contain a Rockwell R65C02P2 (expanded 6502 instruction set) along with an expandable 8K of RAM. Nite Lite Systems is located at P.O. Box R, Billerica, MA 01821, (617) 663-4463 (voice) or (617) 663-4221 (BBS).

Seymour-Radix demonstrated their IMG Scan image scanner for the Atari ST. IMG Scan consists of a small circuit board which plugs into the ST's cartridge port, two long fiber optic cables which attach to a printer's print head, and attending software. The picture you want to scan

is placed in the printer, and is digitized line by line the results immediately being displayed on your monitor. One of the fiber optic cables illuminates the area being scanned, while the other cable returns the picture data. The scanner was working flawlessly at the show, repeatedly digitizing black and white pictures from a magazine. IMG Scan will also digitize color pictures, converting them to a gray scale black and white picture. This scanner does not faithfully digitize certain red images, because IMG Scan uses infrared light which renders some reds invisible to the scanner. IMG Scan is available for \$99.95, directly from Seymour-Radix, P.O. Box 166055, Irving TX 75016, (214) 255-7490.

Regent Software displayed the Informer, a graphic database which integrates text and Degas or Neochrome pictures into one system. The Informer is compatible with data from Habaview, Regent Base and dBMAn, and sells for \$99.95. Hartech USA was selling those Atari picocomputers, the very small but useful calculators which are manufactured in Taiwan.

Antic was selling much of their new software available in the latest issue of *The Catalog*, including that fantastic paint program, Spectrum 512. Tom Hudson was showing off his latest Cyber Studio animation, utilizing his new Cyber Control motion control language. Tom's latest movie, *Spider Patrol*, required a 4 Mega ST and ran for nearly 8 minutes! Nice work, Tom.

Migraph demonstrated Easy-Draw, a GEM based, object oriented text and graphics design package for the ST. Migraph was also selling their SuperCharger upgrade, which allows any Degas or Neochrome picture to be used as the background for an Easy-Draw creation.

Quantum Microsystems Inc. displayed the DeskCart!, the desk accessory cartridge which features 14 accessories and a battery-operated clock/calendar, for \$99.95. QMI also showed their ProTablet ST, a high resolution graphics tablet for the ST which measures 11 x 17.5 inches. The ProTablet ST includes the necessary drivers to emulate a mouse, and attaches to the ST's serial port. ProTablet ST is manufactured for QMI by

Mitsubishi, includes a 6 month warranty and retails for \$395.

Hybrid Arts brought along about 20 synthesizers, along with a few ST systems to demonstrate their professional MIDI software. One interesting product they were selling was a compact disc full of computer generated sounds. Using one of the new sound sampling keyboards, you could record a sound from the CD, modify it with Hybrid Arts software, and play it back using a keyboard. A Midi-Maze contest was held, using 8 ST computers connected through the midi port. Many players won door prizes ranging from software up to a 520ST.

True BASIC Inc. demonstrated their version of True BASIC for the Atari ST. True BASIC's strong points include program compatibility between the IBM PC, Apple Macintosh and the Commodore Amiga, strings up to 1 megabyte, and fast and accurate floating-point math. True BASIC Inc.'s primary target is the educational market, and hence True BASIC does not provide any means of accessing the hardware directly (Peek, Poke, etc.). Line numbers are not required, although they may be included in a program. One of the developers of True BASIC explained that including line numbers in a program will actually slow it down!

Digital Vision demonstrated their slow scan, color video digitizer for the ST, Computereyes. Digital Vision had two complete digitizing systems set up, capturing images of people who attended the show. One system was operated by Digital Vision using their standard acquisition software, while the other system was manned by Trio Engineering. Trio Engineering unveiled Digispec, a fantastic program which allows the Computereyes digitizer to capture an image using all 512 colors the ST is capable of displaying in one screen. The images captured using Digispec were nothing short of amazing, showing none of the roughness evident with Digital Vision's original software. On top of the 512 pure colors, Digispec has two dithering options: 2-level and 4-level which bring the effective number of colors displayable on one screen up to 3375 and 24389! Those digitized pictures you've seen on the Amiga pale (and flicker) by comparison. If you own Computereyes, then you MUST have this program, available from

Trio Engineering Inc. (the folks who wrote Spectrum 512), P.O. Box 332, Swampscott, MA 01907, (617) 964-1673.

Megamax Inc. unveiled Laser C, the fastest C language available for the ST. Megamax improved their original (and fast) C language by adding a RAM resident graphical shell, removing the 32K code limit, and speeding up the compile, link and execute times. How fast is Laser C? Using a RAM disk based system, Mark Williams C version 2.0 required 87 seconds to compile & link the Sieve benchmark, and 2.78 seconds to execute it. The old Megamax C required 70 seconds to compile & link the Sieve, and 2.78 seconds to execute it. The new Laser C from Megamax requires only 5 seconds to compile & link the Sieve, and 2.45 seconds to execute it! Laser C is available now for \$199.95.

[Ed. note: Since I have Megamax, I checked up on this. They said that they will mail out notices to registered owners around the second week of November, and release it a week later. Guess how much... \$20. That includes a brand new manual! When I upgraded my BBS software (also a major upgrade) from MichTron, it cost \$30 just for a 20 or so page manual. Megamax goes highly recommended by me...]

Practical Solutions demonstrated Monitor Master, which allows instantaneous switching between the SM124 monochrome monitor and the SC1224 color monitor connected to a single ST system, for \$49.95. They also unveiled the Video Key, an RGB to composite video converter which allows 1040ST and Mega ST owners to record pictures from an ST on a VCR, or to view their creations on a composite monitor. Contact them for price and availability at (603) 884-9612.

Data Pacific (609 East Speer Blvd., Denver, CO 80203-4240) displayed the Translator One, a disk drive interface which will allow internal or external Atari SF354 and SF314 drives to read and write Apple Macintosh diskettes directly. The Translator One is one part of the Magic Sac Professional system, which also includes the Magic Sac Plus Macintosh emulator cartridge and the Magic Epson Printer Driver which turns an Epson into an Apple ImageWriter. The Translator One retails for \$279.95, the Magic Sac Plus is \$149.95

and the Magic Epson Printer Driver is \$45.00. All three items are also available bundled together for \$449.95, and all are available immediately.

Supra Corporation unveiled the SupraDrive FD-10, a 10 megabyte removable floppy drive system for \$895. This system uses a special high capacity 5 1/4" inch floppy disk which looks identical to a normal DS/DD floppy. The SupraDrive FD-10 connects to the ST's DMA port, and is nearly as fast as Supra's hard disks, with an average seek time of 80 milliseconds. The high capacity floppies are coated with a new type of metal oxide which allows for very high magnetic flux densities. The high capacity disks will be available nationwide by November, 1987 and retail for \$20 to \$30 each! While this may sound expensive, keep in mind that the only other method for transporting large amounts of data is a Bernoulli Box (\$995 for 10 megabyte) and cartridge (\$75 each)!

Supra Corporation also displayed their new 20 and 30 megabyte 3 1/2" inch hard drives (\$699 and \$895) which feature a SCSI expansion port. The SCSI expansion port, which uses a DB-25 connector, allows additional hard drives to be added. Supra's add-on 20 megabyte SCSI hard drive goes for \$599. Supra was also selling the SupraModem 2400, a 2400bps, pocket size modem for only \$179.95.

Alpha Systems was demonstrating the revised Polydisk, a 512K RAM cartridge which now plugs into a 120 volt outlet. Since Polydisk now draws its power directly from a wall outlet, it always retains its information even if the ST is off. Versions will also be available in 1, 2 and 4 megabyte capacities. The 1 megabyte and larger Polydisks also include a battery back-up feature which lasts for 2 1/2 hours. Prices are \$199 for the 1/2 megabyte version and \$299 for the 1 megabyte version.

Eidersoft was demonstrating a soon-to-be-introduced 4096-color paint program. The program works in low resolution only, and pictures can be created in the normal 16 color mode, 512 color Spectrum mode or a special interlaced 4096 color mode (with a slight flicker). They also displayed an expansion cartridge from Weide which included

a Motorola MC68881 math co-processor for the 520ST/1040ST. Unfortunately, I couldn't get any price or availability information about this exciting product. Eidersoft's brochure also listed a graphics tablet (which looked exactly like QMI's) for \$395, which includes the 4096 color paint program. Additional hardware and software was also available from Eidersoft, such as DS/DD 3 1/2" and 5 1/4" disk drives which connect to the ST.

Virtuonics Corporation displayed Virtuoso, a combination animation, telecommunications, music, graphics and text program. Joseph Lyons and Frank Schwartz were on hand demonstrating a very different program than the one they demonstrated for JACS members back on August 20, 1985. Virtuoso is currently available for the Atari XL/XE computers and the Commodore 64/128 computers for \$49.95.

David Ahl and Betsy Staples from the Atari Explorer were in attendance, selling the new November/December issue. Atari didn't unveil any new hardware or software at the show. They did have one Atari PC system, one Atari Laser Printer and a handful of 4 Mega ST computers, along with a few 1040ST's and 130XE's. Atari did have a very impressive graphics demo running on a 130XE, which displayed a smooth diagonal scrolling background drawn in GTIA mode 9 (16 shades of 1 color) with the multicolored fuji symbol in the foreground. Sandy Austin was in attendance, along with two or three other Atari personnel. Many 4 Mega ST's were in existence at the show, with the blitter chips installed. At least one local Atari retailer (the Bit Bucket, (617) 964-3080) was selling the Mega ST's, although I didn't manage to get a price. The 4 Mega ST I played with at the show did have a firmer keyboard than my 520ST, although it didn't provide any tactile feedback when a key hit bottom. The new keyboard felt very similar to the keyboard on my 1982 vintage Atari 800.

I spent nearly six hours at the show, visiting every booth at least twice. I was very happy to find so many companies introducing new products for the ST. Now if only somebody would come out with a 1.44 megabyte 3 1/2" floppy... Supra, are you listening?

A Note from the Editor

This month I have all sorts of good news.

For starters, we were mentioned in the December issue of Antic Magazine. They did an issue on Print Shop and related programs and products, and all those Print Shop Graphics Disks we made got in there. Antic should have another surprise for us sometime early next year....

In case you hadn't noticed, this issue is fairly tiny, in two ways: thickness and print size. The small print size makes it thinner (!). Anyway, to estimate how big the newsletter would be when it was printed in the good old 10 CPI monospaced font, add about 1/2 the number of pages. This smaller newsletter will let us either save on postage and printing costs--or make the newsletter bigger without costing more. It's your decision. I'd love to see it get back to the older size, but to do that I need articles. Maybe we should have an ST Potpourri every month. If I can't get any more articles, that's the route the group may have to take. C'mon, 8-bitters, there's a saying: "What goes around comes around." That applies to your efforts in this group too.

Another **Seth Rosen Note**: He's still out in California getting settled and all that stuff--remember when you were first out on your own? Anyway, keep an eye peeled for his first West Coast article.

Special thanks to Fred Pomeroy, my unofficial co-editor this month (and probably in the future too). Since I can't drive yet, he's handling the run-around stuff, and also making sure I never slip up (remember, when you make a mistake, **you** will rarely see it until it's too late). Thanks, Fred. Any other volunteers for editing? I don't know how long I'll be able to keep editing, with schoolwork and a BBS.

Now even **STart** has a Buyers' Guide! I just got mine in the mail, and it looks pretty good. I always start to wonder when they decide to review things they publish (ever hear of **The Catalog?**), but it looks like they gave roughly equal space to everyone. It's a good sign, and maybe this will help get more people interested in STs (when you can point at a quarter-inch issue full of ads and reviews).

Another thing that may attract interest is **WordPerfect ST**. I'll bet you hadn't noticed I'm writing this on the ST, did you? I just got it today from **Software Fair**. I don't know if some weird behavior I've seen in it is just me doing something wrong (like maybe trying to treat an ST like a PC) or a first-production-run bug.

Read Ian's column closely. He's got a point. The people who participate will be given time and demos, while people who sit back and watch will watch other computers (generally). C'mon, people, speak up and participate! I'm busy here doing the newsletter every month, so about the only things I have to demonstrate right now are WordPerfect (Ian has even more word processors, but WordPerfect is *much* more advanced, at least in part because it's on an ST) and MichTron BBS 2.1. I think even fewer of you would like to see a demo of BBS than you would WordPerfect. That, however, doesn't mean that you people, who sit around and just do your jobs, can't demo something interesting. How about a game you like a lot? A game you hate a lot? It doesn't matter--either would let people know what's out there, and make educated purchasing decisions. Wouldn't you like to know what you're buying before you buy it? Here's your chance to help ten or thirty or seventy people: demo something. And just let me know if you'd like to see WordPerfect or BBS....

Your Editor,

Brian Colflesh

Ahh. Much better...
Mr. Mystery is... JACK TRAMIEL!
And Bob's DEGAS'ed version is
JACS TRAMIEL!

POLAND STRIKES AGAIN!

By Bob Whipple



JACS exchanges our newsletters, *Between Bytes* and *ST Potpourri*, with 100 or so other Atari user's groups across the U.S. and overseas, so I am very fortunate to view these exchanges prior to Joe Verble. What I have seen (since our letter from Poland) is a flood of letters reprinted or explained in about 10 of our exchange newsletters.

These Atarians from "Behind the Iron Curtain" seem to think us folks in the U.S.A. have extra hardware, software, joysticks, books, magazines etc. etc. etc. laying around and we are just waiting for these letters to come in, so we can help these computer deprived folks.

Now, by now you're probably saying to yourself, "Isn't Bob Whipple the guy who wanted us to bring our old/extra stuff to the meeting?" Yeah, that was me, and we did send it with a letter written in Polish by our beloved president, but what has prompted this article is that JACS has just received *another* letter from Poland. This has made me re-evaluate our responsibility/obligation in this matter.

All of us have spent our hard earned bucks on the hardware/software these Atarians are requesting. Just what is Atari doing about this?? Have the Poles written them?? Has Atari responded?!

Enough is enough!! The Polish have said they are willing (and have the knowledge) to repair broken computers, etc. I'm sure Uncle Jack has tons of stuff he just chucks away. Come on Jack, send it to Poland--make their day, or even year!!

If you (Jack Tramiel) need some addresses, call any U.S. Atari User's Group--we'll be glad to give you some!! If you're too busy, this may be a good project for Neil Harris. We all know that diplomacy is Neil's forte, don't we?

MOST VALUABLE MEMBER

Ken Adams



Ken served for two years as vice president of JACS, under Bob Whipple and Forrest Blood. He often set the equipment up at the beginning of meetings. Remember that column "A Look at the World"? That was his. He's written several other articles since then. What more could you ask for?



TO WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE JACS NEWSLETTER

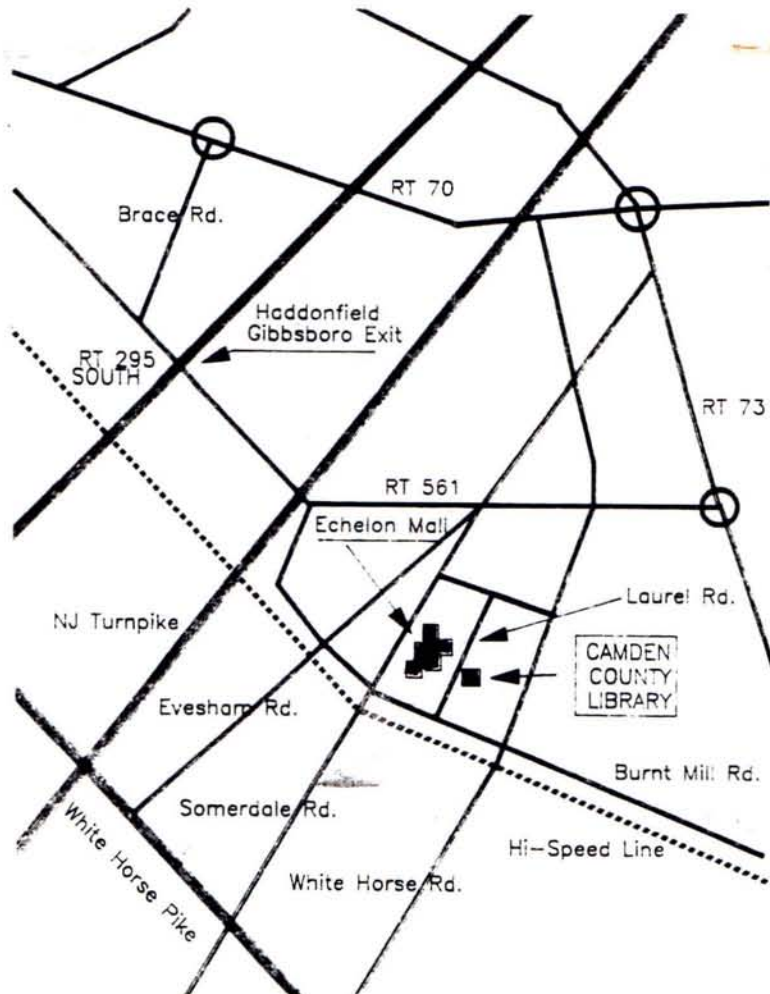
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